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LB 1407

and maybe I'll just review what we...what the committee amendment does and also a little bit about the bill, if you'd permit me. The...LB 1407 is about child care assistance. Prior to an administration action in 1998, there were really...two state programs existed for providing child care assistance to low-income families. One, there was a child care subsidy program for low-income families with incomes up to 120 percent of the federal poverty level with no time limit on the receipt of such assistance and then, two, there was a transitional benefit program providing assistance to ADC recipients with family incomes up to 185 percent of the poverty level for 24 months. That was the Welfare-to-Work program. In 1998, the Department of Health and Human Services expanded eligibility for a child care subsidy program to 185 percent of federal poverty level. That decision effectively created one child care assistance program for all families with incomes up to 185 percent of poverty and then also with no time limit on the receipt of the assistance. LB 1407 raises then those two questions for the Legislature to consider: should the Legislature retain the status quo created by the department's administration decision to provide child care assistance to all families up to 185 percent of federal poverty with no limitation on the receipt of that assistance, or should the Legislature modify that decision? There are two possible responses: putting a time limit on the assistance and then requiring consideration of receipt family assets as well as their gross income, and determine how much assistance to give to the committee amendment, and the committee amendment does both. LB 1407, as introduced, required state reimbursement for work-related child expenses for low-income families with incomes up to a certain percentage of the federal poverty level, which left undetermined in the bill. The bill required child assistance to be based on a cost-sharing plan between the receipt family and the state. Under the bill, receipt families could be required to contribute up to 20 percent of their gross income for child care. The Department of Health and Human Services, and Health and Human Services Finance and Support are required to conduct a study of a sliding fee cost sharing required by the bill and to report the results and recommendations of the study to the Legislature on or before November 15 of 2000 of this year. The Department of Health and Human Services is required to adopt and promulgate rules and